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TO: IMMEDIATE WHITE HOUSE//SITUATION ROOM FOR MR FAZIO.4

ITEM NO: WH-2

DATE: SEP 21, 1974

SUBJECT: SAUDI FEARS OF ISRAELI PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK

TOP SAUDI LEADERS HAVE BEEN TELLING AMBASSADOR AKINS OF THEIR GROWING PESSIMISM ABOUT MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROSPECTS AND THEIR FEAR OF HOSTILITIES SOMETIME BEFORE US ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER. WHILE THEIR WORDS ACCURATELY REFLECT REAL CONCERNS, SOME DEGREE OF EXAGGERATION IS LIKELY INTENDED IN HOPES OF SPURRING US PEACEMAKING EFFORTS AND TO SPEED US ARMS SHIPMENTS TO SAUDI ARABIA.

SAUDI OFFICIALS ARE PARTICULARLY DISCOURAGED BY THE LACK OF ANY SIGNS THAT ISRAEL IS WILLING TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, AND BY WASHINGTON'S FAILURE TO CONDEMN "PROVOCATIVE" ISRAELI ACTIONS ALONG THE SYRIAN BORDER. THEY ARE ALSO DISTURBED BY RECENT HARDLINE STATEMENTS FROM

DATE:

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State Dept. review completed

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ISRAELI LEADERS REGARDING SYRIA AND QUESTION WHETHER THEY HAVE OVERRATED US INFLUENCE ON THE ISRAELIS.

SOME SAUDIS SPECULATE ON AN ISRAELI PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK IN OCTOBER, BEFORE THE ARABS HAVE SOLIDIFIED PLANS FOR A SUMMIT MEETING, AND PRIOR TO US ELECTIONS WHEN THEY SUSPECT THE ISRAELIS COULD GET AWAY WITH AN ATTACK WITHOUT RISKING US POLITICAL SUPPORT AND ARMS AID.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE IS AMONG AN INCREASING NUMBER OF SAUDI OFFICIALS WHO ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE LENGTHY DELIVERY TIME AND TERMS OF PAYMENT FOR US ARMS AID. REPORTEDLY THERE IS INCREASING TENDENCY IN JIDDA TO LOOK TOWARD EUROPE FOR ARMS SUPPLIES.

OMAR SAQQAF, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IS AMONG THOSE WHO FEAR AN ISRAELI PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK IN OCTOBER. HE CURRENTLY IS SEEKING OPINIONS IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS AND PLANS TO PASS ALONG HIS FINDINGS TO AMBASSADOR AKINS BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE UN ON TUESDAY.

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